¶ The Complaynt of a louers lyfe

CHATSWORTH
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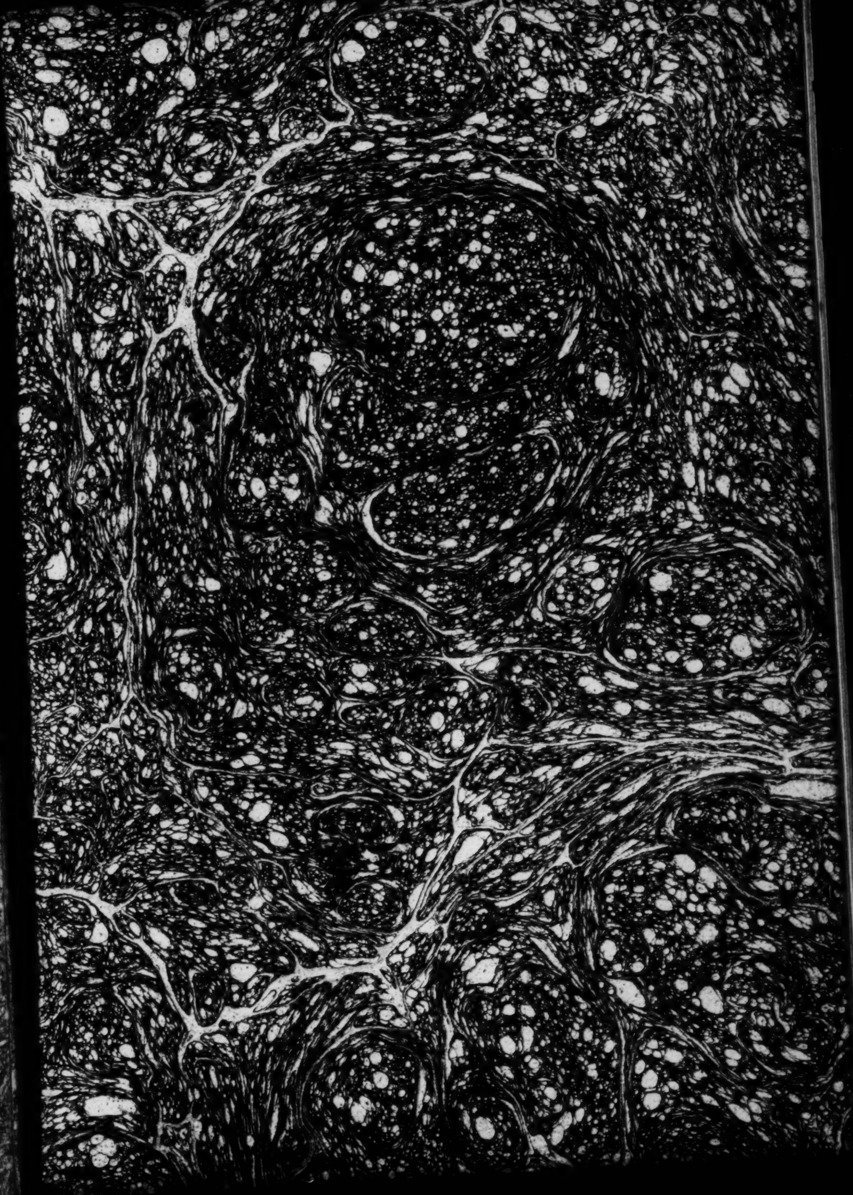

IN maye whan flora the freſſhe luſty quene
The ſoyle hath clad in grene rede & whyght
And phebus gan to ſhede his ſtremes ſhene
Amyd the bole with all the bemes bryght
And lucyfer to chace awaye the nyght
Ayenſt the morowe our oryſon hath take
To byd out of her ſlepe awake

¶ And hertes heuy for to reconforte
From ſluggerdy and heuy nyghtes ſorowe
Nature bad them ryſe and dyſporte
Agaynſt the glad gray morowe
And hope alſo with ſaynt Iohan to borowe
Bad in dyſpyte of daunger and dyſpayre
For to take the holſome luſty ayre

¶ And with a ſyghe I gan for to abrayde
Out of my ſlombre and ſodeynly out ſterte
As he alas that nyghe for ſorowe dyde
My ſykeneſſe ſate aye ſo nyghe myne herte
But for to fynde ſocoure ſmerte
Or at the leeſt ſome releaſe of payne
That me full ſore helde in euery vayne

¶ I roſe me vp and thought I wyll anone
Unto the wood to here the byrdes ſynge
Whan that the myſty vapoure was agone
And clere and fayre was the mornynge
The dewe alſo lyenge lyke ſyluer in ſhynynge
Upon the leues as ony bawme ſwete
Tyll fyry tytan with his perſaunt hete

¶ Had dryed vp the luſty lycoure newe
Upon the herbes in euery grene mede

And that the floures of many dyuers hewe
Upon theyr ſtalkes gan for to ſprede
And for to ſplaye out theyr leues on brede
Ayenſt the ſonne golde borned in his ſpere
That downe to them caſte his bemes clere

¶And by a ryuer forth I gan coſtey
Of water clere as berell or cryſtall
Tyll at the laſt I founde a lytell way
Towarde a parke encloſed with a wall
In compas rounde and by a gate ſmall
Who ſo wolde frely myght gone
In to this parke walled with grene ſtone

¶And in I wente to here the byrdes ſonge
Whiche on the braunches bothe in playne & vale
So loude ſonge that all the worlde ronge
Lyke as it ſholde ſhyuer in peces ſmale
And as me thought that the nyghtyngale
With ſo grete myght her voyce gan out wreſt
Ryght as her herte for loue wolde breſt

¶The ſoyle was playne ſmothe & wonder ſofte.
All ouer ſpredde with tapetis that nature
Had made herſelfe couloured eke alofte
With bowes grene the floures for to cure
That in her beaute they may not longe endure
Fro all aſſaute of phebus feruent fere
Whiche in his ſpere ſo hote is and ſo clere

¶The ayre attempre and the ſmothe wynde
Of zephyrus amonge the bloſſomes whyte
So holſome was and ſo nouryſſhynge by kynde
That ſmale buddes and rounde blomes lyte

In maner gan of her brethe delyte
To gyue vs hope theyr fruyte ſhall take
Ayenſt autompne redy for to ſhake

¶ I ſawe there daphene cloſed vnder rynde
Grene laurere / and the holſome pyne
The myrre alſo that wepeth euer of kynde
The cedrys hyghe as vpryght as a lyne
The phylberde eke that lowe doeth enclyne
Her bowes grene to the erthe downe
Unto her knyght I called demophowne

¶ There ſawe I eke the freſſhe hawthorne
In whyte moteley that ſo ſwete doeth ſmell
Aſſhe / fyrre / and oke / with many a yonge acorne
And many a tre mo than I can tell
And me before I ſawe a lytell well
That had his courſe as I can beholde
Under an hyll with quycke ſtremes colde

¶ The grauell golde the water pure as glaſſe
The bankes rounde the well enuyronnynge
And ſofte as veluet the yonge graſſe
That therupon luſtely gan ſprynge
The ſute of trees aboute compaſſynge
Theyr ſhadowe caſte cloſynge the well rounde
And all the herbes growynge on the grounde

The water was ſo holſome and ſo vertuus
Thrughe myght of herbes growynge beſyde
That lyke the well where as narcyus
Slayne was thrughe vengeaunce of cupyde
Where ſo couertely he dyde hyde
The grennes of dethe vpon eche brynke

That dethe myght folowe who that euer drynke

¶ Ne lyke the pytte of the pegace
Under pernase where poetes slepte
Nor lyke the well of chastyte
Whiche dyane with her nymphes kepte
Whan she naked in to the water lepte
That slewe Atheon with his houndes fell
Onely for he came so nyghe the well

¶ But this well that I here reherse
So holsome was that it wolde aswage
Swollen hertes and the venym perse
Of pensyfhede with all the cruell rage
And euermore refresshe the vysage
Of them that were in ony werynesse
Of grete laboure or fallen in dystresse

¶ And I yͭ had thrughe daunger and dysdayne
So drye a thyrste thought I wolde assaye
To taste a draught of this well or twayne
My bytter langoure yf it myght alaye
And on the banke anone downe I laye
And with myne heed in to the well I raught
And of the water I dranke a good draught

¶ Wherof me thought I was refresshed wele
Of the brennynge that sate so nyghe my herte
That verely anone I gan to fele
An huge parte releassed of my smarte
And therwithall anone vp I sterte
And thought I wolde walke and se more
Yet forth in the Parke and in the holtes hore

¶ And thrughe a launde as I yede apace

In maner gan of her brethe delyte
To gyue vs hope the eyre fruyte ſhall take
Ayenſt autompne redy for to ſhake

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Whan ſhe naked in to the water lepte
That ſlewe Acteon with his handes fell
Onely for he came ſo nyghe the well

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Swollen hertes and the venym peryſſhe
Of penſyfhede with all the cruell rage
And euermore refreſſhe the vyſage
Of them that were in ony weryneſſe
Of grete laboure or fallen in dyſtreſſe

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And of the water I dranke a good draught

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Of the brennynge that ſate ſo nyghe my herte
That veryly anone I gan to fele
An huge parte releaſed of my ſmarte
And therwithall anone vp I ſterte
And thought I wolde walke and ſe more
yet forth in the Parke and in the holtes hore

¶ And thrughe a launde as I yede apace

I gan aboute faſte to beholde
I founde anone a delectable place
That was beſet with trees yonge and olde
Whoſe names here for me ſhall not be tolde
Amyd of whiche ſtode an herber grene
That benched was with turues newe and clene

¶ This herber was full of floures ynde
In to the whiche as I beholde gan
Bytwene an hulfre and a woodbynde
As I was ware I ſawe where laye a man
In blacke and whyte coulre pale and wan
And wonder deely alſo his hewe
Of hurtes grene and freſſhe woundes newe

¶ And euermore deſtreyned wyth ſykeneſſe
Beſyde as this he was greuouſly
For vpon hym he had a hote acceſſe
That daye by daye hym ſhoke full pyteouſly
So that for conſtreynynge of his malady
And hertely wo thus lyenge all alone
It was a dethe for to ſe hym grone

¶ Wherof aſtonyed my fote I gan withdrawe
Gretely wonderynge what it myght be
That he ſo laye and had no felawe
Ne that I coude no wyght with hym ſe
Wherof I had reuth and eke pyte
I gan anone ſo ſoftely as I coude
Amonge the buſſhes me preuely to ſhroude

¶ Yf that I myght in ony wyſe eſpye
What was the cauſe of his deedly wo
Or why that he ſo pyteouſly gan crye

On his fortune and on his feuer alſo
With all my myght I layde myne ere to
Euery worde to marke what he ſayde
Out of his ſwowne amonge as he brayde

¶ But fyrſt yf I ſhall make mencyon
Of his perſone and playnly hym dyſcryue
He was in ſothe without ony excepcyon
To ſpeke of manhode one of the beſt alyue
There maye no man agaynſt trouth ſtryue
For of his tyme and of his age alſo
He proued was there men ſholde haue ado

¶ For one of the beſt there of brede and length
So well made by good proporcyon
yf he had be in his delyuer ſtrength
But thonght and ſykeneſſe were occaſyon
That he thus laye in lamentacyon
Grouelynge on the grouude in place deſolate
Sole by hymſelfe awaked and mate

¶ And for me ſemeth that it is ſyttynge
His wordes all to put in remembraunce
To me that herde all his complaynynge
And all the grounde of his wofull chaunce
yf there withall I may do pleaſaunce
I wyll to you ſo as I can anone
Lyke as he ſayd reherſe euerychone

¶ But who ſhall helpe me nowe to complayne
Or who ſhall nowe my ſtyle guyde or lede
Of Niobe lette nowe the teres rayne
In to my penne and eke helpe in this nede
Thou wofull myrre that feleſt my herte blede

Of pyteous wo and my honde eke quake
Whan that I wꝛyte foꝛ this mannes ſake

¶ Foꝛ vnto wo accoꝛdeth complaynynge
And dolefull chere vnto heuynesse
To ſoꝛowe alſo ſyghynge and wepynge
And pyteous mournynge vnto dꝛerynesse
And who that ſhall wꝛyte of dyſtreſſe
In partye nedeth to knowe felyngely
Cauſe and rote of all ſuche malady

¶ But I alas that am of wytte but dull
And haue no knowynge of ſuche matere
Foꝛ to dyſcryue and wꝛyte at the full
The wofull complaynte whiche that ye ſhall here
But euen lyke as doeth a ſkryuenere
That can no moꝛe what that he ſhall wꝛyte
But as his mayſter beſyde doeth endyte

¶ Ryght ſo fare I that of no ſentemente
Saye ryght nought as in concluſyowne
But as I herde whan I was pꝛeſente
This man complayned with a pyteons ſowne
Foꝛ euen lyke without addycyowne
Oꝛ dyſencreaſe eyther moꝛe oꝛ leſſe
Foꝛ to reherſe anone I wyll me dꝛeſſe

¶ And yf that ony nowe be in this place
That fele in loue bꝛennynge oꝛ feruence
Oꝛ hyndꝛed were to his ladyes grace
With falſe tongues that with peſtylence
Sle true men that neuer dyd offence
In woꝛde ne dede ne in theyꝛ entente
Yf ony ſuche be here now pꝛeſente

¶ Let hym of reuth laye to audyence
With dolefull chere and ſobre countenaunce
To here this man by full ſentence
His mortall wo and his perturbaunce
Complaynynge nowe lyenge in a traunce
With loke vp caſt and rewfull chere
The fytte of whiche was as ye ſhall here

¶ The thought oppreſſed wᵗ inwarde ſyghes ſore
The paynfull lyfe the body languyſſhynge
The wofull gooſt the herte rente and and tore
The pyteous chere pale in complaynynge
The deedly face lyke aſſhes in ſhynynge
The ſalte teeres that fro myne eyen ſhall
Percell declare grounde of my paynes all

¶ Whoſe herte is grounde to blede on heuyneſſe
The thought recepte of wo and of complaynte
The breſt is cheſt of dole and dreryneſſe
The body eke ſo feble and ſo feynte
With hote and colde myne acces is ſo meynte
That nowe I ſhyuer for defaute of hete
And hote as glede nowe ſodeynly I ſwete

¶ Nowe hote as fyre nowe colde as aſſhes dede
Nowe hote for colde for hete agayne
Nowe colde as yſe nowe as coles rede
For hete I brenne and thus bytwene twayne
I paſſed am and all forcaſt in payne
So that my colde playnly as I fele
Of greuous colde is cauſe euerydele

This is the colde of inwarde hyghe dyſdeyne
Colde of dyſpyte and colde of cruell hate

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Whan that I wryte for this mannes ſake

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That can no more what that he ſhall wryte
But as his mayſter beſyde doeth endyte

¶ Ryght ſo fare I that of no ſentemente
Saye ryght nought as in concluſyowne
But as I herde whan I was preſente
This man complayned with a pyteous ſowne
For euen lyke without addycyowne
Or dyſencreaſe eyther more or leſſe
For to reherſe anone I wyll me dreſſe

¶ And yf that ony nowe be in this place
That fele in loue brennynge or feruence
Or hyndred were to his ladyes grace
With falſe tongues that with peſtylence
Sle true men that neuer dyd offence
In worde ne dede ne in theyr entente
Yf ony ſuche be here now preſente

¶ Let hym of reuth laye to audyence
With dolefull chere and ſobre countenaunce
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The deedly face lyke aſſhes in ſhynynge
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¶ Whoſe herte is grounde to blede on heuyneſſe
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Of greuous colde is cauſe euerydele

This is the colde of inwarde hyghe dyſdeyne
Colde of dyſpyte and colde of cruell hate

This is the colde that euer doeth buſy payne
Ayenſt trouth to fyght and make debate
This is the colde that wolde the fyre abate
Of true menynge alas the harde whyle
This is the colde that wyll me begyle

¶ For euer the better the trouth I mente
With all my myght faythfully to ſerue
With herte and all to be dylygente
The leſſe thanke alas I gan deſerue
Thus for my trouthe daunger doeth me ſterue
For one that ſholde my dethe of mercy let
Hath made dyſpyte nowe his ſwerde to whet

¶ Ayenſt me and his arowes to fyle
To take vengeaunce of wylfull cruelte
And tongues falſe thrugh theyr ſlyghty whyle
Hath begon a warre that wyll not ſtynted be
And falſe enuy of wrath and enmyte
Haue conſpyred ayenſte all rygh and lawe
Of theyr malyce that trouth ſhall be ſlawe

¶ And male bouſche gan fyrſt the tale tell
To ſclaunder trouthe of indygnacyon
And falſe reporte ſo loude range the bell
That myſbeleue and falſe ſuſpeccyon
Haue trouth brought to his dampcyon
So that alas wrongefully he dyeth
And falſnes his place occupyeth

¶ And entred is in to trouthes londe
And hath therof the full poſſeſſyon
O ryghtfull god that fyrſt the trouth founde
How may thou ſuffre ſuche oppreſſyon

That falſhede haue iuryſdyccyon
In trouthes ryght to ſle hym gylteles
In his fraunchyſe he may not lyue in pes

¶ Falſly accuſed and of his fone foꝛiuged
Without anſwere whyle he was abſente
He dampned was and may not be excuſed
Foꝛ cruelte ſate in iugemente
Of haſtynes without aduyſemente
And bad dyſdayne do execute anone
His Iugemente in pꝛeſence of his fone

Attourney none ne may admytted bene
To excuſe trouthe a woꝛde to ſpeke
To fayth oꝛ othe the iuge luſt not to ſene
There is no gayne but he wyll be wꝛeke
O loꝛde of trouth to the I call and clepe
How may thou ſe this in thy pꝛeſence
Without mercy murdꝛed innocence

¶ Now god that arte of trouth ſouerayne
And ſeeſt how I lye foꝛ trouthe bounde
So ſoꝛe I knytte in loues fyꝛy chayne
Euen at yͤ deth thꝛughe gyꝛte wᵗ many a wounde
That lykely am neuer foꝛ to ſounde
And foꝛ my trouthe am dampned to the dethe
And nought abyde but dꝛawe alonge the bꝛethe

¶ Conſyder and ſe in thyne eternall ſyght
How that my herte pꝛofeſſed whylom was
Foꝛ to be true with all my full myght
Onely to one the whiche now alas
Of volunte without moꝛe treſpas
Myne accuſers hath taken vnto grace

And cheryſſhed hym my deth for to purchace

¶ What meneth this what is this wonder vre
Of purueyaunce yf I ſhall it call
Of god of loue that falſe hym ſo aſſure
And trewe alas adowne of the whele befall
And yet in ſothe this is the worſte of all
That falſhede wrongefully of trouth hath yͤ name
And trouth ayenward as falſhede bereth yͤ blame

This blynde chaunce this ſtormy aduenture
In loue hathe his mooſt experyence
For who that dothe with trouth mooſt his cure
Shall for his mede fynde mooſt offence
That ſerueth loue with all his dylygence
For who can feyne vnder lowelyhede
Ne fayleth not to fynde grace and ſpede

¶ For I loued one full longe ſyth agone
With all my herte body and full myght
And to be deed my herte can not gone
Frome his heſt but holde that he hath hyght
Thoughe I be banyſſhed out of her ſyght
And by her mouthe dampned that I ſhall dye
Unto my beheſt yet euer obey wyll I

¶ For euer ſyth that the worlde began
Who ſo lyſt to loke and in ſtory rede
He ſhall aye fynde that the true man
Was put abacke where as the falſhede
Furthered was for loue taketh none hede
To ſle the true and hath of hym no charge
Where as the falſe goeth frely at theyr large

¶ I take recorde of Palamydes

The true man the noble worthy knyght
That euer loued and of his payne no reles
Not withſtandynge his manhode and his myght
None vnto hym dyde full grete vnryght
For aye the better he dyde in cheualrye
The more he was hyndred by enuye

¶ And aye the better he dyde in euery place
Thrughe his hye knyghthode and buſy payne
The ferther was he fro his ladyes grace
For to her mercy myght he neuer attayne
And to his dethe he coude it not refrayne
For to daunger but aye obey and ſerue
As he beſt coude playnly tyll he ſterue

¶ What was the fyne alſo of Hercules
For all his conqueſt and worthynes
That was of ſtrengthe alone pereles
For lyke as bokes lyſte of hym expreſſe
He ſet pyllers thrughe his hye proweſſe
Alwaye at gades for to ſygnyfye
That no man myght hym paſſe in cheualrye

¶ The whiche pyles ben ferre be yonde ynde
Be ſet of golde for a rembraunce
And for all that was he ſet behynde
With them that loue luſt febly to auaunce
For hym ſet laſt vpon a daunce
Ayenſt whome helpe may not ſtryfe
For all his trouthe he loſt his lyfe

¶ Phebus alſo for all his perſaunte lyght
Whan that he wente here in erthe lowe
Unto the erthe with venus ſyght

I wounded was thrughe cupydes bowe
And yet his lady lyſt hym not to knowe
Thoughe for her loue his herte dyde blede
She lete hym go and toke of hym none hede

¶ What ſhall I ſaye of yonge Pryamus
Of true Tryſtram for all his hyghe renowne
Of achylles or of antonyus
Of arcyte of hym palamowne
What was the ende of theyr paſſyowne
But after ſorowe dethe and than theyr graue
Lo here the guardon that louers haue

¶ But falſe Iaſon with his doubleneſſe
That was vntrue at colcos to mede
And Terens rote of vnkyndneſſe
And with theſe two eke the falſe Ene
Lo thus the falſe aye in one degre
Had in loue theyr luſt and all theyr wyll
And ſaue falſhede theyr was none other ſkyll

¶ Of thebes eke the falſe arcyte
And demophon eke for his ſlouth
They had theyr luſt and all that myght delyte
For all theyr falſhede and grete vntruth
Thus ener loue alas and that is ruth
His falſe legis furthereth what he may
And ſleeth the true vngoodly day by daye

For true Adone was ſlayne with the bore
Amyd the foreſt in the grene ſhadowe
For venus loue he felte all the ſore
But vulcanus with her no mercy made
The foule chorle and many nyghtes gladi

Where mars her knyght and her man
To fynde mercy comforte none he can

¶ Alſo the yonge freſſhe Jpomones
So luſty fre and of his courage
That for to ſerue with all his herte he cheſe
Athalans ſo fayre of her vyſage
But loue alas quyt hym ſo his wage
With cruell daunger playnly at the laſt
That with the dethe guardonles he paſt

¶ Lo here the fyne of louers ſeruyſe
Lo how loue can his ſeruauntes quyte
Lo how he can his faythfull men dyſpyſe
To ſlee the true man and falſe to reſpyte
Lo how he doeth the ſwerde of ſorowe byte
In hertes ſuche as muſt his luſt obey
To ſaue the falſe and do the true to dey

¶ For faythe nor othe worde ne aſſuraunce
True menynge awayte or buſyneſſe
Styll porte ne faythfull attendaunce
Manhode ne myght in armes worthyneſſe
Purſuyte of worſhyp nor hyghe proweſſe
In ſtrange londe rydynge ne trauayll
Full lytell or noght in loue doeth auayle

¶ Peryll of dethe neyther in ſee nor londe
Hunger ne thruſt ſorowe ne ſykeneſſe
Ne grete empryſes for to take on honde
Shedynge of blode ne manfull hardyneſſe
Nor ofte woundynge at ſawtes by dyſtreſſe
Nor in partynge of lyfe and dethe alſo
All is for nought loue taketh no hede therto

¶ But leſynges with her falſe flaterye
Thrughe her falſhede and with her doubleneſſe
With tales newe and many feyned lye
By falſe ſemblaunce and counterfet humbleſſe
Vnder coloure depeynte with ſtedfaſtneſſe
With fraude couered vnder a pyteous face
Accepte ben now ratheſt vnto grace

¶ And can themſelfe now magnyfye
With feyned porte and preſumpcyon
They chaunge her cauſe with falſe ſurquedrye
Vnder menynge of double entencyon
To thynke one in theyr openyon
And ſay another to ſet themſelfe alofte
And hynder trouthe as it is ſene full ofte.

¶ The which thynge I bye nowe all to dere
Thanked be venus and the god cupyde
As it is ſene by myne oppreſſed chere
And by his arowes that ſtycken in my ſyde
Saue only the dethe I nothynge abyde
Fro daye to daye alas the harde whyle
Whan euer his darte that hym lyſt to fyle

¶ My wofull herte for to ryue atwo
For faute of mercy and lacke of pyte
Of her that cauſeth all my payne and wo
And luſt not ones of grace for to ſe
Vnto my trouthe thrughe her cruelte
And mooſt of all I me complayne
That ſhe hathe Ioye to laughe at my payne

¶ And wylfully hathe my dethe ſworne
All gyltles and woteth no cauſe why

Saufe [illegible]
To her alone to whom [illegible]
O god of loue [illegible]
And to thy blynde double deyte
Of this grete wronge I compleyne me

¶ And to thy stormy wylfull varyaunce
ymeynte with chaunge and grete vnstablenesse
Now vp now downe so rennynge is thy chaunce
That the to truste may be no sykernesse
I wyte it nothynge but thy doublenesse
And who that is an archer and is blynde
Marketh nothynge but sheteth by wenynge

¶ And for that he hath no dyscrecyon
Without auyse he letteth his arowe go
For lacke of syght and also of reason
In his shotynge it happeth ofte so
To hurte his frende rather than his fo
So doeth this god with his sharpe flone
The true sleeth and letteth the fals gone

¶ And of his woundynge this is the worst of all
Whan he hurteth he doeth so cruell wreche
And maketh the seke for to crye and call
Unto his foo for to be his leche
And harde it is for a man to seche
Upon the poynte of dethe in Ieopardye
Unto his foo to fynde remedye

Thus fareth it now euen by me
That to my foo that gaue my herte a wounde
Must aske grace mercy and pyte
And namely there none may be founde

¶ But leſynges with her falſe flaterye
Thꝛughe her falſhede and with her doubleneſſe
With tales newe and many feyned lye
By falſe ſemblaunce and counterfet humbleſſe
Under coloure depeynte with ſtedfaſtneſſe
With fraude couered vnder a pyteous face
Accepte ben now ratheſt vnto grace

¶ And can themſelfe now magnyfye
With feyned poꝛte and pꝛeſumpcyon
They chaunge her cauſe with falſe ſurquedꝛye
Under menynge of double entencyon
To thynke one in theyꝛ opynyon
And ſay another to ſet themſelfe alofte
And hynder trouthe as it is ſene full ofte

¶ The whiche thynge I bye now all to dere
Thanked be venus and the god cupyde
As it is ſene by myne oppꝛeſſed chere
And by his arowes that ſtycken in my ſyde
Saue only the dethe I nothynge abyde
Fro daye to daye alas the harde whyle
Whan euer his darte that hym lyſt to fyle

¶ My wofull herte foꝛ to ryue atwo
Foꝛ faute of mercy and lacke of pyte
Of her that cauſeth all my payne and wo
And luſt not ones of grace foꝛ to ſe
Unto my trouthe thꝛughe her cruelte
And mooſt of all I me complayne
That ſhe hathe Ioye to laughe at my payne

¶ And wylfully hathe my dethe ſwoꝛne
All gylteles and were no cauſe why

Sauſe for the trouth that I haue alwey
To her alone to ſerue faythfully
O god of loue vnto the I crye
And to thy blynde double deyte
Of this grete wronge I complayne me

¶ And to thy ſtormy wylfull varyaunce
ymeynte with chaunge and grete vnſtableneſſe
Now vp now downe ſo rennynge is thy chaunce
That the to truſte may be no ſykerneſſe
I wyte it nothynge but thy doubleneſſe
And who that is an archer and is blynde
Marketh nothynge but ſhoteth by wenynge

¶ And for that he hath no dyſcrecyon
Without aduyſe he letteth his arowe go
For lacke of ſyght and alſo of reaſon
In his ſhotynge it happeth ofte ſo
To hurte his frende rather than his fo
So doeth this god with his ſharpe flone
The true ſleeth and letteth the fals gone

¶ And of his woundynge this is the worſt of all
Whan he hurteth he doeth ſo cruell wreche
And maketh the ſeke for to crye and call
Vnto his foo for to be his leche
And harde it is for a man to ſeche
Vpon the poynte of dethe in Ieopardye
Vnto his foo to fynde remedye

Thus fareth it now euen by me
That to my foo that gaue my herte a wounde
Muſt aſke grace mercy and pyte
And namely there none may be founde

For now my ſore my leche wyll confounde
And god of kynde ſo hath ſet my ure
My lyues foo to haue my wounde in cure

¶ Alas the whyle now that I was borne
Or that I euer ſawe the bryght ſonne
For nowe I ſe that full longe aforne
Or I was borne my deſteny was ſponne
By percas ſuſten to ſle me yf they conne
For they my deth ſhapen ere my ſherte
Onely for trouth I may it not aſterte

¶ The myghty goddes alſo of nature
That vnder god hath the gouernaunce
Of worldely thynges commytted to her cure
Dyſpoſed hath thrughe her purueyaunce
To gyue my lady ſo moche ſuffyſaunce
Of all vertues and therwithall puruyde
To murdre trouth hath taken daunger to guyde

¶ For bounte beaute ſhape and ſemelyhede
Prudence wytte paſſyngely fayrneſſe
Benygne porte gladde chere with lowlyhede
Of womanhede ryght plenteous ⁊ largeſſe
Nature in her fully dyde empreſſe
Whan ſhe her wrought and all theyr laſt dyſdayne
To hynder trouth ſhe made her chaumberlayne

¶ Whan myſtruſt alſo and falſe ſuſpeccyon
With myſbyleue ſhe made for to be
Chefe of counſeyll to this concluſyon
For to exyle trouth and eke pyte
But of her courte to make mercy fle
So that dyſpyte now holteth forthe her reyne

Thrughe haſty beleue of tales that men feyne

¶ And thus I am for my trouthe alas
Murdred and ſlayne with wordes ſharpe & kene
Gylteles god wote of all treſpas
And lye and blede vpon this colde grene
Now mercy ſwete mercy my lyues quene
And to your grace of mercy yet I prey
In your ſeruyce that your man may dey

¶ But and ſo be that I ſhall dye algate
And that I ſhall none other mercy haue
Yet of my dethe let this be the date
That by your wyll I was brought to my graue
Or haſtely yf that ye lyſte me ſaue
My ſharpe woundes that ake ſo and blede
Of mercy charyte and alſo of womanhede

For other maner playnly is there none
But onely mercy to helpe in this caſe
For thoughe my wounde blede euer in one
My lyfe my dethe ſtondeth in your grace
And thoughe my gylte be nothynge alas
I aſke mercy in all my beſt entente
Redy to dye yf that ye aſſente

For there agaynſt ſhall I neuer ſtryue
In worde ne werke playnly I ne may
For leuer I haue than to be alyue
To dye ſothely and it be to her pay
Ye thoughe it be this eche ſame daye
Or whan that euer her lyſt to deuyſe
Suffyſeth me to dye in your ſeruyſe

¶ And god yͭ knoweſt yͤ thought of euery wyght

Ryght as it is in euery thynge thou mayſt ſe
yet or I dye with all my full myght
Lowly I praye to graunte vnto me
That ye goodly fayre freſſhe and fre
Whiche ſle me onely for defaute of ruthe
Or that I dye may knowe my trouthe

❡ For that in ſothe ſuffyſeth me
And ſhe it knowe in euery cyrcumſtaunce
And after I am well apayed that ſhe
yf that her luſt of dethe to do vengeaunce
Unto me that am vnder her legeaunce
It ſytte me not her dome to dyſobeye
But at her luſt wylfully to deye

❡ Without grutchynge or rebellyon
In wyll or worde holly I aſſente
Or ony maner contradyccyon
Fully to be at her commaundemente
And yf I dye in my teſtamente
My herte I ſende and my ſpyryte alſo
What ſomeuer ſhe luſt with them to do

❡ And alder laſt to her womanhede
And to her mercy me I recommaunde
That lye nowe here bytwene hope and drede
Abydynge playnly what ſhe lyſt commaunde
For vtterly this is no demaunde
Welcome to me whyle me laſteth breth
Ryght at her choyſe whether it be lyfe or dethe

In this matere more what myght I ſayne
Syth in her honde and in her wyll is all
Bothe lyfe and dethe my Ioye and all my payne

And fynally my herte holde I ſhall
Tyll by my ſpyryte by deſtenye fatall
Whan that her luſt fro my body wende
Haue here my trouthe and thus I make an ende.

¶ Nota perſeuerãtiam. Amantis.

¶ And with that worde he can ſyghe as ſore
Lyke as his herte wolde ryue a twayne
And helde his peas ⁊ ſpake not a worde more
But for to ſe his wo and mortall payne
The teeres gan fro myne eyen rayne
Full pyteouſly for very inwarde ruthe
That I hym ſawe ſo languyſſhe for his truthe

¶ And all this whyle my ſelfe I kepte cloſe
Amonge the bowes and my ſelfe gan hyde
Tyll at the laſt the wofull man aroſe
And to a lodge wente there beſyde
Where all the maye his cuſtome was to abyde
Sole to complayne of his paynes kene
Fro yere to yere vnder the bowes grene

¶ And for bycauſe that it drewe to the nyght
And that the ſonne his arke dyurnall
Paſſed was ſo that his perſaunt lyght
His bryght bemes and his ſtremes all
Were in the wawes of the water fall
Vnder the bordure of our occyan
His chare of golde his courſe ſo ſwyftely ran

¶ And whyle the twylyght and rewes rede
Of phebus lyght were dyaurate a lyte
A penne I toke and gan me faſt ſpede
The wofull playnte of this man to wryte
Worde by worde as he dyde endyte

Ryght as it [illegible]
yet or I dye with all my full myght
Lowly I praye [illegible]
That ye goodly [illegible]
Whiche ſhe me oweth [illegible]
Or that I dye [illegible]

¶ For that in ſothe [illegible]
And ſhe it knowe [illegible]
And after I am well apayed that ſhe
yf that her [illegible]
Unto me that [illegible]
It ſytte me not [illegible]
But at her [illegible]

¶ Without grutchynge or rebellyon
In wyll or worde holly I aſſent
Or ony maner contradyccyon
Fully to be at her commaundement
And yf I dye in my teſtament
My herte I ſende and my ſpyryte alſo
What ſomeuer ſhe lyſt wyth them to do

¶ And alder laſt to her womanhede
And to her mercy me I recommaunde
That lye nowe here bytwene hope and drede
Abydynge playnly what ſhe lyſt commaunde
For vtterly this is no demaunde
Welcome to me whyle me laſteth breth
Ryght at her choyſe whether it be lyfe or dethe

In this matere more what myght I ſayne
Syth in her honde and in her wyll is all
Bothe lyfe and dethe my Ioye and all my payne

And fynally my herte holde I ſhall
Tyll by my ſpyryte by deſtenye fatall
Whan that her luſt fro my body wende
Haue here my trouthe and thus I make an ende.

¶ Nota perſeuerãciam. Amantis.

¶ And with that worde he can ſyghe as ſore.
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And to a lodge wente there beſyde
Where all the maye his cuſtome was to abyde
Sole to complayne of his paynes kene
Fro yere to yere vnder the bowes grene

¶ And for bycauſe that it drewe to the nyght
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A penne I toke and gan me faſt ſpede
The wofull playnte of this man to wryte
Worde by worde as he dyde endyte

Lyke as I herde and coude hym tho reporte
I haue here ſet your hertes to dyſporte

¶ Yf ought be amyſſe laye the faute in me
For I am worthy for to here the blame
yf ony thynge amyſſe reported be
To make this dytte for to ſeyne lame
Thrugh myne vnkūnynge but for to ſeyne yͤ ſame
Lyke as this man his complaynte dyd expreſſe
I axe mercy and forgyueneſſe

¶ And as I wrote me thought I ſawe a ferre
Ferre in the weſt luſtely appere
Eſperus the goodly bryght ſterre
So gladde ſo fayre ſo perſaunt eke of chere
I mene venus with her bemes clere
That heuy hertes onely to releue
Is wonte of cuſtome for to ſhewe at eue

¶ And I as faſt fell downe on my kne
And euen thus to her I gan to prey
O lady venus ſo fayre vpon to ſe
Let not this man for his trouthe dey
For that Ioye thou haddeſt whan thou laye
With mars thy knyght whom vulcanus founde
And with a reyne vnuyſybly you bounde

¶ Togyder bothe two in the ſame whyle
That all the courte aboute celeſtyall
At your ſhame gan laughe and ſmyle
O fayre lady well wyllynge founde at all
Comforte to carefull o goddeſſe immortall
Be helpynge nowe and do thy dylygence
To lette the ſtremes of thyne influence

¶ Deſſende downe in furtherynge of the trouthe
Namely of them that lye in ſorowe bounde
Shewe now thy myght ⁊ on theyr wo haue ruthe
Theyr falſe daunger ſle them and confounde
And ſpecyally let thy myght be founde
For to ſocoure what ſo that thou may
The true man that in the herber laye

¶ And all true forther for his ſake
O glad ſterre o lady venus myne
And cauſe his lady hym to grace take
Her herte of ſtele to mercy ſo enclyne
Or that thy bemes go vp to declyne
And or that thou now go fro vs adowne
For that loue thou haddeſt to downe

¶ And whan ſhe was gone to her reſt
I roſe anone and home to bed wente
For very wery me thought it for the beſt
Praynge thus in all my beſt entente
That all true louers that be with daunger ſhente
With mercy maye in releas of her payne
Recured be or maye come efte agayne

¶ And for that I may no lenger wake
Farewell ye louers all that be true
Prayenge to god and thus my lyue I take
That or the ſonne to morowe be ryſen newe
And or he haue agayne his roſen hewe
That eche of you maye haue ſuche a grace
His owne lady in armes to enbrace

¶ I mene thus that in all honeſte
Without more ye maye togyder ſpeke

What so you lyst at good lyberte
That eche may to other theyr hertes breke
On Jelousy onely to be wreke
That hathe so longe of malyce and enuy
Warred trouth with his tyranny

¶ Lenuoy.

Pryncesse pleaseth it your benygnyte
This lytell dytte to haue in mynde
Of womanhede also for to se
your true man may mercy fynde
And pyte eke that longe hathe ben behynde
Let agayne be prouoked to grace
For by my trouthe it is agaynste kynde
False daunger to occupy his place

¶ Lenuoy du quayer

¶ Go lytell quayre go vnto my lyues quene
And my very hertes souerayne
And be ryght glad for she shall the sene
Suche is thy grace but I alas in payne
Am lefte behynde but not to whome to complayne
For mercy trouthe grace and eke pyte
Exyled be/ that I may not attayne
Recure to fynde of myne aduersyte

¶ Finis.

¶ Imprynted at London in the Flete strete at the
sygne of the Sonne by Wynkyn de Worde.

12 APR 58